



THE DERBY DISPATCH

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ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES CONCLUDES SATURDAY WITH ARKANSAS DERBY, LEXINGTON STAKES

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Thursday, April 11, 2019) – The twists and turns of the Road to the Kentucky Derby will come to a close Saturday and, when the dust settles, the Top 20 horses for the Grade I, \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve will be decided.

Saturday's Arkansas Derby will award 100 points to the winner and 40 points to the runner-up, which is an almost-guaranteed spot in the starting gate for the Kentucky Derby. Additionally, the 1 1/8-mile races will award 20 and 10 points, respectively, to the third and fourth-place finishers, which could be decisive to those competitors that have already garnered points in earlier races.

The Arkansas Derby features Rebel Stakes (GII) winners **Omaha Beach** and **Long Range Toddy**, along with runner-up **Improbable**. While Long Range Toddy is mathematically confirmed in the starting gate for the "Run for the Roses", Omaha Beach (37.5 points) and Improbable (25 points) need valuable points to secure their spot in the field.

A record number of points could be needed to make the starting gate for this year's Kentucky Derby. Since the Road to the Kentucky Derby series was inaugurated in 2013, the No. 20 point-earner has averaged about 24 points and the most was **Mo Tom's** 32 in 2016. Prior to this weekend's action, the cutoff to make the Kentucky Derby field was 37.5 points.

Also staged on Saturday is the Lexington Stakes which will award the Top 4 finishers points on a 20-8-4-2 scale. Several horses not already in the Top 20 will contest that race including No. 23 **Another twistafate** (30 points) and No. 25 **Sueno** (28 points).

The Arkansas Derby will go as Oaklawn Park's Race 11 with a post time of 7:23 p.m. while Keeneland's Lexington will go as Race 9 at 5:34 p.m.

LOUISIANA DERBY WINNER BY MY STANDARDS BREEZES HALF-MILE IN :48.80 AT CHURCHILL DOWNS – With just three weeks until the Grade I, \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve, TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (Grade II) winner **By My Standards**, breezed a half-mile in :48.80 at 5:45 a.m. Thursday morning at Churchill Downs.

Flanked by **Allied Racing Stable's** **Chester Thomas** and trainer **Bret Calhoun**, By My Standards was led to the track by stable pony **Frankie** with Calhoun's wife **Sara** aboard and worked through eighth-mile fractions of :13 and :24.80, prior to an extended gallop out of five furlongs in 1:01.20 and six furlongs in 1:13.40. He pulled up near the track kitchen with a final seven-furlong time of 1:27.20, according to clocker **John Nichols**. Jockey **Gabriel Saez** was aboard for the work.

"He keeps progressing really well," Saez said. "He didn't really turn a hair this morning. I wanted to make sure I gave him an easy work like last week and he did everything on his own. I think we're in a great spot right now with two works remaining until the Derby."

By My Standards would give veteran trainer Calhoun his first starter in the Kentucky Derby.

"I never had a top 3-year-old colt that I thought could get us to the Derby," Calhoun said. "This is really the first horse we've had that can get us there. It's been a pretty bumpy road as a trainer to finally get here and I'm really excited to be in the position we are."

"Horse trainers are naturally nervous people. We've seen so many things come up the last minute with horses. We'll be on the edge of our chairs from now until Derby. I'm very pleased to have six weeks between races. He ran his best race in the Louisiana Derby. I'm very happy we have some time between starts since he ran his best figures across the board in that race. He bounced out of the race in good shape but I think we'll be coming into the race a fresh horse."

By My Standards is a son of Goldencents out of the Muqtarib mare A Jealous Woman.

"Quite frankly, horses either can get a mile-and-a-quarter or not," Calhoun said. "It's a very demanding distance and I don't want to push him or go overboard with his training. He's ready and where he needs to be."

By My Standards is stabled on Barn 23 on the backstretch of Churchill Downs. – **Kevin Kerstein**

ARKANSAS DERBY A KEY PREP FOR IMPROBABLE, OMAHA BEACH – **Bob Baffert** already has **Game Winner** and **Roadster** set for the Kentucky Derby and **Improbable** can make it a formidable trio with an impressive showing in Saturday's \$1 million Arkansas Derby (GI) at Oaklawn Park. Listed as the 8-5 favorite in an 11-horse field, Improbable exits a neck second in the first division of the March 16 Rebel (GII) at Oaklawn and the chestnut son of City Zip will receive a rider switch to **Jose Ortiz**.

Omaha Beach comes next on the morning line at 2-1 and **Mike Smith** rides the up-and-coming colt, who made his stakes debut a winning one with a nose score over 2-year-old champion Game Winner in the second division of the Rebel. Smith also rides Santa Anita Derby (GI) winner Roadster and will be forced to choose between the two if Omaha Beach runs big. **Richard Mandella** trains the son of War Front.

As a major final prep race in the Road to the Kentucky Derby series, the 1 1/8-mile Arkansas Derby will award points on a 100-40-20-10 scale to the top four finishers. Improbable needs a top three finish, currently ranking 27th on the Kentucky Derby leaderboard with 25 points, and Omaha Beach must add to his 37.5-point ledger or will drop outside the top 20 (currently 21st).

Improbable will start from the rail and Omaha Beach appears favorably drawn in post 3.

Long Range Toddy is already safely in the Kentucky Derby field with 53.5 points, winning the first division of the Rebel and Remington's Springboard Mile in December. He's also placed in an additional pair of qualifiers, the Southwest (GIII) and Smarty Jones at Oaklawn, and has been pegged as the early 5-1 third choice in the Arkansas Derby. The well-bred son of Take Charge Indy displayed outstanding push-button acceleration last time and **Jon Court** retains the mount for **Steve Asmussen**.

Asmussen will also be represented by a trio of outsiders in **Jersey Agenda**, **Laughing Fox** and **Tikhvin Flew**.

Galilean will return from Southern California after a third in the first division of the Rebel and **Flavien Prat** accompanies the **Jerry Hollendorfer** pupil. **Country House**, who finished second in the Risen Star (GII) at Fair Grounds two back, will try to show more for **Bill Mott** after a well-beaten fourth in the Louisiana Derby (GII) and **Joel Rosario** will take over piloting duties. **Gray Attempt** brings high speed to the equation following a wire-to-wire win in the six-furlong Gazebo on March 23. — *James Scully/TwinSpires.com*

ANOTHERTWISTAFATE, SUENO SEEK TO QUALIFY IN LEXINGTON — **Anothertwistafate** and **Sueno** will enter Saturday's \$200,000 Lexington (GIII) outside the Kentucky Derby bubble, ranking 24th and 26th respectively on the leaderboard, and the 20-point winner's prize should be enough to guarantee either a spot in the 20-horse Derby field. The stakes winners highlight a 10-horse field in the 1 1/16-mile race at Keeneland.

Anothertwistafate picked up 10 points and capped a three-race win streak when recording a seven-length romp in the Feb. 16 El Camino Real Derby at Golden Gate Fields. He just missed securing a Kentucky Derby berth in the March 24 Sunland Derby (GII), rallying fast to be a neck second, and increased his points ledger to 30. The dark bay colt is by Scat Daddy, sire of 2018 Triple Crown winner **Justify**, and **Anothertwistafate** likes to be forwardly placed. **Javier Castellano** picks up the mount for trainer **Blaine Wright**.

Sueno won a listed stakes at Golden Gate Fields in early December and has placed in three straight qualifiers since, finishing second in the Sham (GIII) at Santa Anita and Southwest (GIII) at Oaklawn Park before posting a third in the Louisiana Derby (GII) at Fair Grounds. **Keith Desormeaux** conditions the well-traveled colt and **Corey Lanerie** will be back up on the stalker.

As part of the Road to the Kentucky Derby series, the Lexington is worth a combined 34 points (20-8-4-2 scale).

Harvey Wallbanger may be prepping for a Preakness bid on May 18. A maiden winner in his juvenile finale, the **Kenny McPeck**-trained colt opened 2019 with a 29-1 upset in the Fountain of Youth (GII) at Gulfstream Park but did not carry his form forward in the Florida Derby (GI), checking in a well-beaten eighth. **Brian Hernandez Jr.** rides.

Zelden looks like the one to catch following a fourth in the Tampa Bay Derby (GII). The former sprinter reeled off wicked splits on the front end and was beaten only four lengths by **Tacitus**, who came to capture the Wood Memorial (GII) last weekend. **Hawaiian Noises** will make his make his first graded stakes start with a three-race win streak in tow, most recently taking the 6 1/2-furlong Animal Kingdom at Turfway Park. **Knicks Go**, who sprung a 70-1 upset the Breeders' Futurity (GI) and finished second in the Breeders'

Cup Juvenile (GI) at long odds last fall, is also entered. The speedy colt must rebound from three consecutive unplaced outings. — *James Scully/TwinSpires.com*

PAST PERFORMANCES & HISTORY

Brinset.com Kentucky Derby Contenders Past Performances
<http://bit.ly/2UgHCrP>

Arkansas Derby Stakes History
<http://bit.ly/2Usu1xz>

Lexington Stakes History
<http://bit.ly/2GGIIMh4>

ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY TOP 25

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Tacitus	Bill Mott	150
2.	Vekoma	George Weaver	110
3.	Plus Que Parfait	Brendan Walsh	104
4.	Roadster	Bob Baffert	100
5.	By My Standards	Bret Calhoun	100
6.	Maximum Security	Jason Servis	100
7.	Game Winner	Bob Baffert	85
8.	Code of Honor	Shug McGaughey III	74
9.	Haikal	Kiaran McLaughlin	70
10.	War of Will	Mark Casse	60
11.	Long Range Toddy	Steve Asmussen	53.5
12.	Tax	Danny Gargan	52
13.	Cutting Humor	Todd Pletcher	50
14.	Win Win Win	Mike Trombetta	50
15.	Gray Magician	Peter Miller	41
16.	Spinoff	Todd Pletcher	40
17.	Bodexpress	Gustavo Delgado	40
18.	Signalman	Kenny McPeck	38
19.	Master Fencer (JPN)	Koichi Tsunoda	JRTKD
20.	+Bye Bye Hong Kong	Andrew Balding	ERTKD
21.	Omaha Beach	Richard Mandella	37.5
22.	Bourbon War	Mark Hennig	31
23.	Instagrاند	Jerry Hollendorfer	30
24.	Anothertwistafate	Blaine Wright	30
25.	Country House	Bill Mott	30

DERBY DETAIL

BYE BYE HONG KONG WINS CARDINAL CONDITION STAKES, SECURES POINT LEAD ON EUROPEAN ROAD TO KENTUCKY DERBY — **King Power Racing Co. Ltd.**'s **Bye Bye Hong Kong** narrowly defeated **Antillies** by a neck Thursday in the \$77,254 Cardinal Condition Stakes at Chelmsford City and secured the points lead on the European Road to the Kentucky Derby with 30 points.

Churchill Downs officials are awaiting word from Bye Bye Hong Kong's ownership group to see if they would pay the \$200,000 late supplement to the Triple Crown and accept the invitation to compete in the Kentucky Derby. Should his connections decline, the invitation would move to Antilles, who also is not currently Triple Crown eligible.

JAPAN ROAD TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY WINNER MASTER FENCER TRAVEL PLANS SET – Katsumi and Yasuyo Yoshizawa's Master Fencer (JPN), who secured a Derby invitation via the Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby, is scheduled to travel to the U.S. on April 23, according to **Kate Hunter** – the Japan-based representative for Churchill Downs.

Master Fencer is slated to spend 42-48 hours in quarantine in Chicago prior to vanning to Keeneland on April 25 and continuing to Churchill Downs on Tuesday, April 30.

ADDITIONAL DERBY, OAKS ARRIVALS – As of Thursday morning, there were two Kentucky Derby and five Longines Kentucky Oaks contenders on the backstretch of Churchill Downs.

Kentucky Derby contenders: **By My Standards** (Barn 23), **Plus Que Parfait** (Barn 9).

Kentucky Oaks contenders: **Champagne Anyone** (Barn 26), **Liora** (Barn 30), **Out for a Spin** (Barn 37), **Serengeti Empress** (Barn 29) and **Street Band** (Barn 28).

Liora is expected to breeze Saturday or Sunday while Street Band is slated to breeze Sunday or Monday.

TRIPLE CROWN NEWS AND NOTES – Trainer **Todd Pletcher** reported Sunland Derby (GIII) winner **Cutting Humor** and Louisiana Derby (GII) runner-up **Spinoff** would complete most of their training at Palm Beach Downs before shipping to Churchill Downs. ... Trainer **Danny Gargan** arrived at Keeneland on Wednesday but **Tax** is still stabled in New York. Tax's arrival plans are still in flux but Gargan expects the colt to ship to "possibly" have one work in Kentucky. ... **Plus Que Parfait** arrived at Churchill Downs early Thursday morning and is based in **Brendan Walsh's** Barn 9. ... Nominations close on Saturday for Kentucky Derby Week stakes. For more information, visit <https://www.churchilldowns.com/horsemen/stakes/nominations-forms/>.

'INSIDE CHURCHILL DOWNS' RETURNS FRIDAY

"**Inside Churchill Downs**" will begin its fifth season on ESPN Louisville's **ESPN 680/105.7** when it returns to the airwaves Friday at 6 p.m.

The weekly one-hour horse racing radio show will be co-hosted by Churchill Downs Racetrack's **Darren Rogers** and **Kevin Kerstein**, and deliver a wide-ranging list of interesting guests, from jockeys, trainers, owners to well-informed handicappers and other industry insiders.

Those outside the Louisville radio market can listen live online at <http://www.espnloouisville.com/> or via podcast on the station's website or <https://soundcloud.com/>.

THE RUNDOWN

LEXINGTON (GII)

Saturday, April 13, \$200,000, 3yo, 1 1/16 M, Keeneland (R9), Post time: 5:34 p.m. EDT, Lexington, Ky, Top 4 Points: 20-8-4-2. TV: TVG

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ODDS
1.	+Shang (0)	Irad Ortiz Jr.	Steve Asmussen	10-1
2.	+Hawaiian Noises (0)	John Velazquez	Wesley Ward	10-1
3.	Sueno (28)	Corey Lanerie	Keith Desormeaux	5-1
4.	Another twistafate (30)	Javier Castellano	Blaine Wright	2-1
5.	Harvey Wallbanger (10)	Brian Hernandez Jr.	Kenny McPeck	7-2
6.	Chase the Ghost (0)	Miguel Mena	Dallas Stewart	30-1
7.	Knicks Go (18)	Albin Jimenez	Ben Colebrook	15-1
8.	Owendale (0)	Florent Geroux	Brad Cox	12-1
9.	Zenden (5)	Tyler Gaffalione	Victor Barboza Jr.	6-1
10.	Roiland (10)	James Graham	Tom Amoss	15-1

ARKANSAS DERBY (GI)

Saturday, April 13, \$1 million, 3yo, 1 1/8 M, Oaklawn (R11), Post time: 7:41 p.m. EDT. Hot Springs, Ark., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: NBCSN, TVG.

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	Improbable (25)	Jose Ortiz	Bob Baffert	8-5
2.	Six Shooter (2)	David Cohen	Paul Holthus	30-1
3.	Omaha Beach (37.5)	Mike Smith	Richard Mandella	2-1
4.	Tikhvin Flew (0)	Tyler Baze	Steve Asmussen	30-1
5.	Laughing Fox (0)	Ricardo Santana Jr.	Steve Asmussen	20-1
6.	Gray Attempt (10)	Stewart Elliott	Jinks Fires	8-1
7.	Galilean (7.5)	Flavien Prat	Jerry Hollendorfer	10-1
8.	Country House (30)	Joel Rosario	Bill Mott	12-1
9.	+One Flew South (0)	Calvin Borel	Doug O'Neill	50-1
10.	Jersey Agenda (0)	Ramon Vazquez	Steve Asmussen	30-1
11.	Long Range Toddy (53.5)	Jon Court	Steve Asmussen	5-1

FANTASY STAKES (GI)

Friday, April 12, \$500,000 3yo fillies, 1 1/16 M, Oaklawn (R8), Post time: 6:04 p.m. EDT. Hot Springs, Ark., Top 4 Points: 100-40-20-10. TV: TVG.

#	Horse (Points)	Jockey	Trainer	ML
1.	++Cosmic Code (0)	Jon Court	Brad Cox	12-1
2.	\$.Filly Joel (6)	David Cohen	Juan Alvarado	20-1
3.	Irish Mischief (0)	Stewart Elliott	Brad Cox	10-1
4.	Lady Apple (0)	Ricardo Santana Jr.	Steve Asmussen	6-1
5.	Destiny Over Fate (0)	Walter de la Cruz	Jesus Cruz	30-1
6.	++Super Tap (0)	Orlando Mojica	Bob Hess Jr.	50-1
7.	++Kiffle (0)	Alex Canchari	Jesus Cruz	50-1
8.	Motion Emotion (20)	Mike Smith	Tom Van Berg	5-2
9.	Brill (2)	Florent Geroux	Jerry Hollendorfer	7-2
10.	Orra Moor (10)	Luis Saez	Todd Pletcher	4-1
11.	++K P Slickem (20)	Tyler Baze	Weston Martin	20-1
12.	Oxy Lady (21)	Declan Cannon	Jack Sistrerson	6-1

+Not Triple Crown Nominated

++Not Kentucky Oaks Nominated

\$ Notified Churchill Downs officials that they will late nominate to the Kentucky Oaks

ROAD TO DERBY VIDEO SERIES

- Episode 7: A Big Race for an Intimate Track
<http://bit.ly/RTKDEP7>
- Episode 6: A Potential Super Star
<https://bit.ly/2SUIYYC>
- Episode 5: Follow Trainer Kelly Breen as he Trains Son of Orb
<https://bit.ly/2SwgeF3>
- Episode 4 :Kenny McPeck – The Underdog Trainer
<https://bit.ly/2t1fyM>
- Episode 3: Breeders' Cup Battle Produces Early Derby Favorite
<https://bit.ly/2UZkWrY>
- Episode 2: A Twist in the Road at Keeneland
<https://bit.ly/2DBL05h>
- Episode 1: Neuroscience to the Iroquois Stakes
<https://bit.ly/2SR398P>

SCULLY'S KENTUCKY DERBY REPORT

Baffert, Mott & Padding Blue Grass Winner

Bob Baffert's barn flexed its muscles with a one-two finish in the Santa Anita Derby (Grade I) and the Kentucky Derby maestro will send a top contender to the upcoming Arkansas Derby (GI). With a pair of Triple Crowns in the last four years and his sights set on a record-equaling sixth Kentucky Derby victory, Baffert could have the top three betting choices at Churchill Downs.

Roadster made a case for Kentucky Derby favoritism by defeating well-respected stablemate and juvenile champion **Game Winner**, and **Improbable** will be on display at Oaklawn Park. The King and his court.

Baffert's synonymous with Triple Crown races but the Kentucky Derby limelight marks new ground for **Bill Mott**. **Tacitus** stretched his win streak to three in the Wood Memorial (GII) at Aqueduct, becoming only the second runner to capture multiple qualifiers this year, and was bet down as the 8-1 fourth choice in Pool 4 of the final Kentucky Derby Future Wager as a result. He's a developing colt with upside for a Hall of Fame trainer and boasts the top BRIS Speed rating (103) this year. And I'm not taking those triple-digit BRIS Late Pace numbers lightly.

The optics proved fascinating as **Vekoma** dominated the Blue Grass (GII) at Keeneland, delivering a 3 1/2-length triumph as the 7-5 favorite. His front left has always rolled out instead of taking a straight line forward and while drawing away in deep stretch, Vekoma's stride became extremely funky as all four legs appeared out of sorts.

After a flurry of three major prep races last weekend, the Road to the Kentucky Derby series concludes with a pair of qualifiers this weekend.

The \$1 million Arkansas Derby offers a 170-point bounty (100-40-20-10 scale) and will affect the Kentucky Derby leaderboard, with **Omaha Beach** (21st in the standings), **Country House** (25th) and **Improbable** (27th) all needing points to lock down a berth. The \$200,000 Lexington (GIII) at Keeneland offers less points (20-8-4-2) but still has value in this topsy-turvy season, with **Anothertwistafate** (24th) and **Sueno** (26th) the featured contenders.

Santa Anita Derby

After racing close to the early pace, Roadster dropped back entering the far turn and then came again with a wide rally into stretch. He passed four rivals to win going away by a half-length and stamped himself a major Kentucky Derby player.

Baffert touted him as one to watch before the career debut and Roadster won his first start by open lengths as the odds-on favorite at Del Mar last summer. The gray colt emerged from a third-place finish in the Del Mar Futurity (GI) with a throat issue, necessitating minor surgery to clear his airways, and didn't make it back to the races for six months. Roadster returned March 1 at Santa Anita, stretching out to two turns with a sharp entry-level allowance tally, and he's now won three-of-four starts for **Speedway Stable**.

By Quality Road, Roadster counts as half-siblings **Ascend**, winner of the 1 1/4-mile Manhattan (GI); and **Moro Tap**, a long-distance specialist who placed in the 1 1/2-mile Louisville H. (GIII). Those relatives preferred turf but there's no

pedigree concerns surrounding the 1 1/4-mile Kentucky Derby distance with Roadster.

Being lightly-raced doesn't raise red flags in this era but seldom does a leading Kentucky Derby contender arrive having faced such short fields, with Roadster squaring off against only 14 combined rivals over the last three starts. He'll be staring at 19 opponents in the post parade under the Twin Spires. And I would prefer to see a triple-digit BRIS Speed rating on the résumé, with Roadster netting a career-best 98 figure in the Santa Anita Derby. He garnered a 98 Late Pace after producing triple-digit numbers in the previous two starts.

It was still easy to be impressed by Roadster's stretch run and he'll enter on the upswing for a dangerous conditioner, with Baffert owning a record 15 Triple Crown race wins. **Mike "Big Money" Smith** has served as the regular rider. No one should be surprised to see further improvement from the peaking colt on May 4.

Roadster utilized an unorthodox trip but saved ground until launching his move. Game Winner lost ground the entire way in a short field, with **Joel Rosario** parking the multiple Grade I winner four wide entering the first turn and sticking to an overland route throughout. The **Gary and Mary West** colorbearer appeared poised to overtake pacesetter **Instagrاند** leaving the far turn but didn't get past until deep stretch. And while grinding his way toward the front, Game Winner could not withstand the late bid of Roadster.

Unbeaten in four starts last year including the Breeders' Cup Juvenile (GI), Game Winner has opened 2019 with a pair of setbacks, returning with a nose second to Omaha Beach in the Rebel's second division. He'll still be very live in the Kentucky Derby betting.

The last seven Kentucky Derby winners captured their final prep and the top three last year (**Justify-Good Magic-Audible**) were exiting wins. But don't buy-in to its importance. Baffert's first two Kentucky Derby winners, **Silver Charm** (1997) and **Real Quiet** (1998), were beaten in the San Felipe (GII) and Santa Anita Derby before sweeping the first two legs of the Triple Crown. Real Quiet had dropped three straight prior to arriving in Louisville, Kentucky.

Game Winner is as honest as they come and Baffert has compared him favorably to Hall of Famer Silver Charm, a fine compliment indeed. The classy colt registered a 103 BRIS Speed rating winning the Breeders' Cup Juvenile at Churchill Downs.

OXO Equine's Instagrاند ran big in defeat but appears unlikely to make the Kentucky Derby field with 30 points. The Pat Day Mile (GIII) on the Derby Day undercard will be an option or he could wait for the May 18 Preakness.

Wood Memorial

Tacitus overcame an extremely rough trip in the early stages of the Wood Memorial, knocked around repeatedly by a chain reaction started by an opponent crossing in front of horses, and had to get back in stride after being clipped from behind by another rival on the first turn. That versatility could come in handy in a 20-horse Kentucky Derby field.

After settling about 10 lengths off the pace along the backstretch, Tacitus launched a fierce rally once he came under a ride on the far turn. In fact, it was nearly a carbon copy of his win in the March 9 Tampa Bay Derby (GII) where Tacitus appeared to be going nowhere before being asked by **Jose**

Ortiz. He responds both times with an eye-catching turn of foot, quickly erasing a 7 ¼-length deficit with three furlongs remaining in the Wood. The lightly-raced colt has lacked focus so far, relying upon the jockey for instructions, and that begs the question: what happens when he figures it out?

Tacitus broke his maiden the second time out at Aqueduct in early November and came back from a five-month hiatus to post an 8-1 upset in the Tampa Bay Derby, scoring by a comfortable 1 ¼-length after rallying fast to the lead in midstretch. The **Juddmonte Farms** homebred improved to three-for-four in the Wood, earning career-best Speed (103), E2 Pace (100) and Late Pace (101) ratings. He may not have beaten the strongest field but Tacitus looked good drawing away from runner-up **Tax** in the latter stages and will bring formidable BRIS numbers to the Kentucky Derby.

A son of Tapit, who has sired three winners of the 1 ½-mile Belmont Stakes, Tacitus is out 2014 champion older mare Close Hatches, a five-time Grade I winner over a route of ground. Storm Cat sired the second dam in this classy female family.

Tax avoided early trouble and loomed a threat after rallying into contention off the far turn. The Arch gelding dueled with Tacitus before yielding in deep stretch, winding up 1 ¼ lengths behind the winner, and backed up his win in the Feb. 2 Withers (GIII) at Aqueduct. Turf will always be an option given his distinguished female family and Tax has registered triple-digit BRIS Speed ratings in the last three starts (103-102-101). **Danny Gargan** trains for **R.A. Hill Stable** and **Reeves Thoroughbred Racing**.

Haikal closed plenty of ground while never a serious threat to the top two and finished a clear third in his first two-turn attempt. The **Kiaran McLaughlin** pupil stamped his ticket winning the March 9 Gotham (GIII) at a one-turn mile and Haikal will bring a closing kick to the first leg of the Triple Crown.

Blue Grass

Vekoma showed speed from post 2 and floated a little wide into the first turn of the Blue Grass, allowing **Somelikeithotbrown** to advance along the rail and show the way. Vekoma tracked closely in second until the completion of the far turn and surged into the stretch with a widening advantage. The athletic chestnut rolled unopposed to the wire.

A convincing winner of his first two starts in New York, including the Nashua (GIII) at a one-turn mile, Vekoma found himself in traffic for the first time when returning this year in the March 2 Fountain of Youth (GII) at Gulfstream Park and wound up a non-threatening third. The Candy Ride colt had to go fast to establish favorable positioning in the Blue Grass, registering 105 E1 and 114 E2 Pace ratings, and equaled a career-best 101 BRIS Speed rating. But Vekoma came home slowly, completing the final three furlongs in 39.38 seconds.

While his tactical speed could prove advantageous in the Kentucky Derby, Vekoma faces a challenge at the 1 ¼-mile distance with his pedigree. He hails from the Grade I-winning sprinter Mona de Momma, a daughter of champion sprinter Speightstown. Vekoma will remain a promising prospect for trainer **George Weaver** and owners R.A. Hill Stable and **Gatsas Stables** even if the Kentucky Derby doesn't turn out favorably.

Win Win Win was stopped leaving the far turn and after regaining his momentum, the **Michael Trombetta**-trained colt closed ground to edge **Signalman** by a nose for second. Win Win Win was exiting a third as the 7-5 favorite in the Tampa Bay Derby, coming up empty after rallying into contention by upper stretch, and it's fair to ask whether he'll be good enough next time. But his late kick will offer some appeal underneath in Kentucky Derby exotics.

Signalman enjoyed a good stalking trip behind the early runners but lacked a punch in the final furlongs. Third in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, he concluded his 2-year-old season with a Kentucky Jockey Club (GII) win at Churchill Downs but has put himself in a perilous position by opening 2019 with a seventh in the Fountain of Youth and a third in the Blue Grass. Signalman currently sits 18th on the leaderboard with 38 points but could be surpassed by runners in the Arkansas Derby and Lexington this weekend.

Scully's Kentucky Derby Top 10

- 1 OMAHA BEACH: Combines speed & resiliency; poised to run a big one in Arkansas Derby
- 2 LONG RANGE TODDY: Displayed enormous improvement beating Improbable last time
- 3 TACITUS: Mott & Tapit haven't been a factor in the Derby; this could be the year
- 4 GAME WINNER: How do you leave the hard-knocking colt out of the top three?
- 5 ROADSTER: Santa Anita Derby winner merits serious respect
- 6 IMPROBABLE: Exits wide trip in return, no surprise if he runs well in Arkansas Derby
- 7 MAXIMUM SECURITY: Florida Derby winner will bring dangerous speed to Louisville
- 8 BY MY STANDARDS: Up-and-comer promises to be overlooked off Louisiana Derby upset
- 9 VEKOMA: Respect his talent but worry 10 furlongs will be too far
- 10 ANOTHER TWIST AFATE: Will know more after the Lexington. — James Scully/TwinSpires.com

ROAD TO THE LONGINES KENTUCKY OAKS TOP 20

#	Horse	Trainer	Points
1.	Bellafina	Simon Callaghan	132
2.	Champagne Anyone	Ian Wilkes	113
3.	Street Band	Larry Jones	105
4.	Out for a Spin	Dallas Stewart	100
5.	Liora	Wayne Catalano	71
6.	Restless Rider	Kenny McPeck	62
7.	Serengeti Empress	Tom Amoss	60
8.	Jaywalk	John Servis	55
9.	Chocolate Kisses	Mark Casse	51
10.	Jeltrín	Alexis Delgado	51
11.	Positive Spirit	Rodolphe Brisset	50
12.	Flor de la Mar	Bob Baffert	40
13.	\$-Cookie Dough	Stan Gold	40
14.	\$-Dunbar Road	Chad Brown	40
15.	Eres Tu	Steve Asmussen	24
16.	Sweet Diane	Eddie Kenneally	22
17.	Oxy Lady	Jack Sistonson	21
18.	Point of Honor	George Weaver	20
19.	Naughty Joker	Wesley Ward	20
20.	Bizwhacks	Doug O'Neill	20

§ Notified Churchill Downs officials that they will late nominate to the Kentucky Oaks

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